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# **THE 'INDIVIDUAL-GROUP APPROACH' UNDER THE NEW TESTAMENT: A NEW INTERPRETATION OF THE MISSION OF LORD JESUS**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Law in the Bible is ambiguous. On one hand, it is construed as an Old Law whose central claim is community *simpliciter*, under which people have been divided into races, religions, cultures and classes since the Fall (See Col. 3: 11f). On the other hand, it is construed as a New Law whose central claim is individual *simpliciter*, under which “there are no more distinctions between Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female, but all are one in Christ Jesus” (Ga. 3: 28).

I argue that the New Law considers the individual *simpliciter*, only as the ultimate end toward which the human race is directed; but that between the consideration of community, and that of individual, the mission of Jesus consisted in calling for “the individual as part of a group,” as a step forward toward the ultimate purification of the individual from any community-type thinking.

By calling for individual per se, the New Testament breaks free from all types of community. Indeed the community fails the dignity of individuals. A

contemporary example of this would be the community regime in Lebanon. For supposing that a Lebanese citizen decides not to belong to any religious community, he or she would lose major human rights, such as the right to marry, the right to inherit or the right to rule.

Although calling for individual *per se*, the New Testament has yet kept a sense of association. An indication of this is the Analogy of Body (1 Co. 12: 12-30), and love of neighbor (1 Co. 13-13a). Thus, it seems legitimate to wonder what the nature of this association is.

If the community fails human dignity and if the New Testament breaks free from the community, then the association Jesus wants to keep is that which does not fail human dignity. Now, association is either community or group. Since the New Testament breaks free from community then the kind of association Jesus calls for is group. Therefore, the group is the kind of association that does not fail human dignity.

The "group" appears under the New Testament to be the medium between "community" and "individual." Indeed the Analogy of Body (1 Co. 12: 12-30) gives expression to diversity united into and for one. This does not mean, however, that any kind of diversity is group. Only in diversity calling for individual *per se* does a group find expression. It is in this sense that the individual is part of a group.

Now, the term 'part' is ambiguous. In one sense, it means that the individual is an *integrative part* of the group. In another sense, it means that the individual is a *reflective part* of the group.

The 'integrative part' and the 'reflective part' complete each other. Where the 'integrative part' is concerned with 'constituting' and, thus, 'building up' the group or making the existence of the group possible, the 'reflective part' is concerned with 'behavior' and 'treatment,' the individual behavior and the treatment of one another reflecting on the whole. In this sense, the concept of 'reflective part' is dependent on that of 'integrative part.' In order for a 'behavior' and a 'treatment' to reflect the group as a whole, the group must have been constituted first.

The similarity between the 'integrative' and 'reflective' parts lies in the type of relationship between individuals and their groups. There are two kinds of relationships existing between individuals and their groups: a horizontal and a vertical. The first governs the relationship among individuals as parts of the group; the second governs the relationship between the individual and the group as a whole. The 'integrative part' can better be described as 'horizontal,' and the 'reflective part' as 'vertical.' The 'integrative part' studies not only the

interdependence of individuals as parts of the group, but also their interdependence for the aim of building up the group. The 'reflective part' studies how the behavior of individuals reflects the group standard of behavior, and how the individuals' way of behaving towards one another reflects on the well-being of all as a group.

Accordingly, there are two types of 'integrative part,' a 'constitutive' and a 'composite' part; and two types of 'reflective part,' a 'comprehensive' and a 'causal,' part.

I say that the individual is an integrative part of the group, if the group is *constituted* of individuals, in the same manner as words are constituted of letters. And I say that the individual is an integrative part of the group, if the group is primarily *composed* of individuals, in the same manner as words are primarily composed of letters.

The difference between a constitutive, and a composite, part lies in the approach. With regard to the first, the approach is taken from the angle of the individual; whereas with regard to the latter it is taken from the angle of the group. The first considers individuals as aggregate parts of the group, and, therefore, investigates how parts are dependent on one another for the sake of the group as a whole. This can be accomplished through 'love' according to the New Law. The second type of the 'integrative part,' namely the 'composite part,' considers the group in its primary elements, *i.e.*, by reducing the group to its individuals, investigating how an individual behavior can help to build up the behavior of the group as a whole. This does not mean that individuals create the group behavior. It simply means that the individual behavior exemplifies the already set up group behavior in a manner that contributes to the improvement of the whole. This has also been considered by the New Law, where the standard setting of the group behavior is Love, and where works of love exemplify the group behavior in a manner that helps to reach the group's ideal. It is in this sense that the group can be reduced to its individuals; for, although individuals are dependent on a common standard of behavior, the survival of the group behavior, and therefore, the group itself, is dependent on its individuals' works of love.

There are also two types of 'reflective part,' a 'comprehensive' and a 'causal' part. With regard to the first, I say that the individual is a 'reflective part' of the group, because the individual mirrors the group as a whole, in the same manner as the existence of human being mirrors the existence of animal. And with regard to the second, I say that the individual is a 'reflective part' of the group,

because the individual reflects the group as a whole, in the same manner as effect reflects cause.

Under the ‘comprehensive part,’ group behavior applies to every individual behavior by the fact that the individual is a part of the group; this is why individual behavior reflects group behavior. Under the ‘causal part,’ the treatment given by one individual to another affects the group as a whole, depending on whether the treatment is or is not in compliance with the group standard setting; this is why, under the ‘causal part,’ the individual reflects the group as effect reflects cause.

Some might argue that the New Law considers the individual as only an ‘integrative part’ of the group. Others might argue to the contrary, that the New Law considers the individual as only a ‘reflective part’ of the group. A close reading of the New Testament reveals, however, that the Law of Christ considers the individual as both an ‘integrative’ as well as a ‘reflective’ part of the group.

This paper, then, will inquire into the following three questions:

- Does the New Law consider the individual as an integrative part of the group? (Part I)
- Does the New Law consider the individual as a reflective part of the group? (Part II)
- Does the New Law consider the individual as both an integrative, and a reflective part of the group? (Part III)

#### *PART I. DOES THE LAW IN THE NEW TESTAMENT CONSIDER THE INDIVIDUAL AS AN INTEGRATIVE PART OF THE GROUP?*

Some scholars may argue that the New Law considers the individual as only an ‘integrative part’ of the group. In his letter to the Church in Rome, Saint Paul says that “[j]ust as each of our bodies has several parts and each part has a separate function, so all of us, in union with Christ, form one body...” (Rm. 12: 4-5).

But the parts of the body are those out of which that body is composed, as individuals form one body in union with Christ. But ‘all of us’ connotes various parts of the whole world. Therefore, the individual is considered as an ‘integrative part’ of the group.

Also, being parts of one body, individuals are dependent on one another, in the same manner as letters are dependent on one another to form one word. This

is what Saint Paul means when, following the above quotation, he emphasizes that "as parts of [the one body] we belong to each other" (Rm. 12: 5).

I conclude that the New Law can no longer be regarded as calling for the 'individual' *simpliciter*; rather, for the individual as an 'integrative part' of the group. The question remaining for investigation, then, is whether the term 'integrative part' falls within the meaning of 'constitutive' or 'composite' part?

Some may argue that the concept 'integrative part' refers to the 'constitutive part.' I have indicated above that the 'constitutive part' is that which considers individuals as constituting the group in the same manner as letters constitute words; and that these individuals are dependent on one another to form the group, in the same manner as letters are dependent on one another to form words. The New Testament means that all, "Jews as well as Greeks, slaves as well as citizens" (1 Co. 12: 13), are considered Christ's body; and each of them is a different part of it (1 Co. 12: 27). Therefore, the concept 'integrative part' here should refer to 'constitutive part.'

Others may argue that the concept 'integrative part' refers to the 'composite part.' I have indicated above that the 'composite part' is that which considers individuals as primarily constituting groups in the same way letters are first composing words; and that these individuals are conceived constructively, namely, that individual behaviors can help to build up group behavior, in the same way the choice of letters can help to build up particular words. Saint Paul says in his first letter to the Church in Thessalonika, "[m]ay the Lord be generous in increasing your love and make you love one another and the whole human race..." (1 Th. 3: 12).

This means that the Christians' love for one another is not only limited to members of the group, but also to members of the whole human race, for individuals constitute the group to which they belong not only as members but also as human beings. It is in this sense that the group is reduced to its ultimate units. Therefore, the concept 'integrative part' here should refer to 'composite part.'

A close look at the texts, however, reveals that both types of 'integrative part' are considered by the New Law. The essence of the 'constitutive part' is necessity of diversity, whereas the essence of the 'composite part' is necessity of unity. No less than letters that constitute the word, individuals who are parts of the group must be *diverse*. For "[i]f all the parts were the same, how could it be a body?" (1 Co. 12: 19).

And no less than the word that is reduced to its first components in composition, namely, the letter, which is the common element to all, rather than

to such and such a letter, the group is reduced to the individual *simpliciter*, and not to such and such an individual. For “[i]f one part is hurt, all parts are hurt with it. If one part is given special honor, all parts enjoy it” (1 Co. 12: 26).

Both types of the ‘integrative part’ can, actually, be inferred from the Analogy of Body. In his First Letter to the Church at Corinth (1 Co. 12: 12-30), Saint Paul states as follows:

- 12 “Just as a human body, though it is made up of many parts, is a single unit because all these parts, though many, make one body, so it is with Christ.
- 13 In the one Spirit we were all baptized, Jews as well as Greeks, slaves as well as citizens, and one Spirit was given to us all to drink.
- 14 Nor is the body to be identified with any one of its many parts.
- 15 If the foot were to say, ‘I am not a hand and so I do not belong to the body,’ would that mean that it stopped being part of the body?
- 16 If the ear were to say, ‘I am not an eye, and so I do not belong to the body,’ would that mean that it was not a part of the body?
- 17 If your whole body was just one eye, how would you hear anything? If it was just one ear, how would you smell anything?
- 18 Instead of that, God put all the separate parts into the body on purpose.
- 19 If all the parts were the same, how could it be a body?
- 20 As it is, the parts are many but the body is one.
- 21 The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I do not need you,’ nor can the head say to the feet, ‘I do not need you’.....
- 26 If one part is hurt, all parts are hurt with it. If one part is given special honor, all parts enjoy it.
- 27 Now you together are Christ’s body; but each of you is a different part of it.”

It is clear from v. 12 that the way human body gives unity to all its component parts is the way Christ, as unifying principle of his Church, gives unity to all in his Body. But, according to v. 27, each of the component parts of the Body is a ‘different part of it.’ I have stated above that that which defines the ‘constitutive part’ is ‘diversity.’ Thus, v. 12, taken together with v. 27, considers the individual as a constitutive part of the group.

Some might take issue with the way this text applies to the meaning of ‘composite part’ given above, it being impossible to reduce the body to one unit,

since it is all parts that make one body according to v. 12, and v. 27; and since the body is not 'identified with any one of its many parts' according to v. 14.

But what is understood by 'first in composition' to confer upon the 'composite part' the sense of unity, can have no basis here if the body is understood as a limited 'accomplished body.' If 'body' is construed in the latter sense, I would be admitting that the 'group' in the New Testament is just an 'individual matter,' where the sum of all individuals would make up the group. This material conception of the 'body' does not apply here. For Christ's body is a divine entity which existed prior to the existence of any of its members. But I ask: if this is so, how would it be possible that the group could be reduced to its individuals so that individuals would help to build up the group as a whole? I answer that this is possible by asking every individual to exemplify the standard setting in a way that induces others to imitate it, and thus to get ever closer to the group's ideal. The 'body' is, therefore, construed as an on-going entity, which is the only conceptual way possible to 'build up' the group by reducing it to its individual parts. In this sense, the New Law confers to the individual of the group the quality of 'composite part.'

It follows that common to both 'integrative parts' under the New Law, is the identification of the activity of the individual with the activities of all individuals belonging to the group. An indication of this is v. 26, namely, "if one part is hurt, all parts are hurt with it. If one part is given special honor, all parts enjoy it." That this is a call for a uniform standard of behavior is clear from the fact that the individual treatment is considered in reference to the whole group, where all are considered one in the body of Christ (v. 12); and just as the whole body is hurt when one part is hurt (vs. 12 & 26), in a similar way the whole group is hurt when one member is maltreated by another of the group (*See, e.g., Mt. 18: 8-9*).

The reason the individual is considered as a 'constitutive part' of the group is because each individual's behavior affects the wellbeing of the group, in the same way the position of the letters in the word affects the meaning of that word. If this is granted, the standard behavior of the group should, then, be reduced to its ultimate unit, namely, the individual, since the behavior of one can help to build up the wellbeing of the group, in the same way the position of one letter can help to determine the meaning of the word.

I conclude, then, that the New Law considers both the 'constitutive' and the 'composite' parts, as elements of the 'integrative part.'



*PART II. DOES THE LAW IN THE NEW TESTAMENT CONSIDER THE INDIVIDUAL AS A REFLECTIVE PART OF THE GROUP?*

Contrary to the view that holds that the New Law considers the individual as only a 'constitutive part' of the group, some argue that the New Law considers the individual as only a 'reflective part' of the group.

In support of this position, two texts can be cited: The first is extracted from the letters of Saint Paul, the second from the Gospel according to Saint Matthew. In his letter to the Church in Galatia, Saint Paul asks members of the community to serve one another in works of love, for "if you go snapping at each other and tearing each other to pieces, you had better watch or you will destroy the whole community" (Ga. 5: 15).

The second text explains the first, in the respect that if one individual is affected the whole would be also affected (Mt. 25: 35-40; *see also* Mt. 25: 42-45).

It might be contended that the citation of both texts to support the view that the New Law considers the individual as only a 'reflective part' of the group, has little validity. For it is unclear that both texts would not support the contrary view studied under the First Part, namely, that the New Law considers the individual as only a 'composite part' of the group. In fact, both imply that individuals should serve one another. If the sentence "if you go snapping at each other and tearing each other to pieces... you will destroy the whole community," is constructed in the affirmative sense, the meaning would be no different from that of 'composite part.' The construction of the sentence in the affirmative sense would be as follows: If you serve each other through works of love, you will help to build up the whole community. Now, I have mentioned above that the 'composite part' reduces the group to its ultimate parts, the individuals, who exemplify group behavior, through works of love, in a way that would influence other fellow members to help to 'build up the church.' Similar statements can be made, it is argued, with regard to the second text, where the whole is affected if only one individual is affected. Thus, according to this contention, the texts quoted do not support the view that the New Law takes the individual as a reflective part of the group. It is, rather, the contrary which is true.

I disagree. For it is clear from both texts that the New Law by asking Christians to serve one another does not simply stress the dependence of one on another as aggregate parts for the purpose of forming the whole group. Rather, the New Law here commands that members of the Christian group serve one another through 'works of love,' thus participating in the expression of a certain pattern of group behavior, by which the activity of one individual becomes a worship of the whole. The relationship of the individual to the group is not

considered here 'horizontally' as is the case under the 'composite part.' Rather, it is considered 'vertically' where the individual behavior reflects the pattern of group behavior as a whole; for "to go snapping at each other and tearing each other to pieces" would not be indicative of love. And if love shows itself in the way we behave (2 Co. 8: 8-11, 24; cf. 1 Jn. 3: 18), and holds the group together (See Col. 3: 14; cf. 2 P. 1: 7), the behavior of individuals should, therefore, reflect the group as a whole.

The New Law addresses the individual as part of humanity as a whole, thus as a group, and not necessarily as part of the community. For in the text cited above, Saint Paul asks individuals to 'serve one another' in works of love, "since the whole Law is summarized in a single command: Love your neighbor as yourself" (Ga. 5:14). Now, the term 'neighbor' is ambiguous: Where 'neighbor' had meant 'fellow countryman' under the Old Law (Lv. 19: 18), it simply refers to 'fellow man' under the New Law (Mt. 25: 40). This ambiguity finds an expression in the Letter of Saint Paul to the Church in Galatia, where he states that under the New Law "there are no more distinctions between Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female, but all [...] are one in Christ Jesus" (Ga. 3: 28) which means that under the Old Law there were distinctions between Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female, etc. If so, the individual should then be considered as a reflective part of a 'group,' and not only of a 'community,' even though the latter has been mentioned by St. Paul in the text above. For should the term 'community' be construed in the Old Testament sense it would have been beyond understanding the New Law's call for the elimination of any distinction based on race ('Jew and Greek') or class ('slave and free') or gender ('male and female') (See Ga *id*).

The Christ's Law would lose its qualification as New Law, if it were simply to repeat what the Old Law had already said. Because the Old Law differently from the New Law places an emphasis on community, rather than on individual. And since the New Law calls for a kind of association, this association should then be construed as 'group' and not 'community.' The concept of 'community' is different from the concept of 'group.' Where the former considers the 'whole' without consideration given to individuals, the latter considers the whole with consideration to the individual as part of a group. Accordingly, I believe that the New Law stresses no less the individual *simpliciter* than the individual as part of a group. It seems rather that the New Law considers the individual as part of a group, only as a forwarding step toward the understanding of the individual as a part of the human family as a whole, *i.e.*, the individual *simpliciter*. It is the latter that is conceived as a new community based on 'humanness as a sense of identity,' differently from the old community which is based on race, religion,

gender or class. An indication of this is the way Saint Paul proceeds in his Letter to the Church in Rome in this manner, by emphasizing first, love embracing one another, and then, love embracing all mankind (*See* Rm 12). This is also clear from his Letter to the Church in Galatia, where he states that “We must never get tired of doing well because if we don’t give up the struggle we shall get our harvest at the proper time. While we have the chance, we must do well to all, and especially to our brothers in the faith.”(Ga. 6: 9-10. *See also* 1 Th 5: 15).

From all that has been said, I have shown how the Law under the New Testament, can no longer be regarded as calling for the individual *simpliciter*; rather, for the individual as a ‘reflective part’ of the group, in reference to the first two texts quoted under this Part, extracted from Saint Paul’s Letter to the Galatians, and from the Gospel according to Saint Matthew.

The question remaining for investigation, then, is whether the term ‘reflective part’ carries the meaning of ‘comprehensive’ or ‘causal’ part?

Some may argue that the concept of ‘reflective part’ refers to ‘comprehensive part.’ I have explained above that the concept of ‘comprehensive part’ refers to the individual reflecting the group, in the same manner as human being reflects the existence of animal, and to the standard of behavior, where the individual’s behavior reflects the group’s standard. This argument can best find expression in the Golden Rule, as stated in the Gospel of Matthew, at 7:12 (“...always treat others as you would like them to treat you.”).

Others may argue, however, that the concept of ‘reflective part’ refers to ‘causal part.’ I have explained above that ‘causal part’ refers to the individual as reflecting the group, in the same manner as effect reflects cause; and to the standard of treatment, where the individual’s treatment refers to the group’s standard. In his Letter to the Church at Rome, Saint Paul says:

“... if your attitude...is upsetting your brother, then you are hardly being guided by charity.”(Rm. 14:15)

“... let us adopt any custom that leads to peace and our mutual improvement.”  
(Rm. 14:19)

The first text shows how the individual’s activity, done out of love, sets a guiding example for other members of the group, which according to the second text, helps to build-up the group as a whole. But to build up the Church does not mean here, as explained above under the introduction, that the group standard had not existed previous to the individual activity; on the contrary, the individual activity here only exemplifies the standard setting of the group as a whole. In this respect, the individual’s behavior is the result of the pre-existing group’s

standard behavior as a whole. This can also be supported by another Letter of Saint Paul to the Church at Philippi (Ph. 1: 9), which says:

“My prayer is that your love for each other may increase more and more and never stop improving your knowledge and deepening your perception so that you can always recognize what is best.”

The main claim of this text is ‘improvement of knowledge,’ and recognition of the best, are consequences of the mutual love that should define the group. Knowledge is not merely the result of intellectual process, but also the result of experience; when it matures it becomes similar to love. And that which is best must be good, since best here is the result of love, and love is good.

But the New Law states that love holds the group together, as Saint Paul says in his Letter to the Church at Colossae (Col. 3: 12-14; *cf.* 2 P 1: 7):

“...you should be clothed in sincere compassion, in kindness and humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with another; forgive each other as soon as a quarrel begins...Over all these clothes, to keep them together and complete them, put on love.”

Thus, the New Law defines groups in terms of love. And for individuals to be parts of groups, they must comply with the standard setting of the New Law (*See* Col. 3: 5-17). Therefore, the ‘reflective part’ should refer here to the ‘causal part.’

A close look at the texts, however, reveals that both types of ‘reflective parts’ are considered under the New Law. The essence of ‘comprehensive part’ is ‘necessity of generality’; whereas the essence of ‘causal part’ is ‘necessity of particularity.’ No less than an expression whose meaning can be applied to any of its terms, such as the term ‘animal’ whose meaning can be applied to any human being, the group standard setting or ‘group love’ is applicable to every individual part of the group. And no less than effect which reflects cause, an individual part of a group must reflect that group, when that which characterizes the group also characterizes the individual part of that group.

Both aspects of the ‘reflective part’ have found expression, under the New Law, in three types of Laws: (i) The Law of Love; (ii) the Law of Judgment, and (iii) the Law of Treatment. The first two Laws correspond to the ‘comprehensive part,’ the third Law to the ‘causal part.’

According to the first Law, the individual reflects the group’s objective, *i.e.*, the individual action exemplifies the group standard setting. According to the second Law, the individual reflects the group’s function, *i.e.*, the individual action is expected from all group’s members. And, according to the third Law,

the individual reflects the group's nature, *i.e.*, the individual action reflects the group's humanness.

According to the Law of Love, the individual part exemplifies, through 'works of love,' that which characterizes its group, so that which is commanded to all is reflected in the individual's activity. Also, according to the Law of Judgment, because the service of one to another reflects the type of service that every individual is expected to give to all, one's service through works of love reflects what is characteristic of one's group.

And according to the Law of Treatment, love one's neighbor as oneself is indicative of treatment commanding love not of the individual as such but of the group as a whole; for it is the dignity of the group which is reflected in the love of one another. The fact that under the Law of Treatment the term 'neighbor' means 'human being,' and therefore, that what is reflected in one's treatment of another in a group, does not refute the fact that, as indicated earlier, the New Law requires that love of one another in a group be the beginning of love, which will then spread to the whole human race in terms of humanness as sense of identity (*See 1 Th. 3d*).

I conclude, then, that the New Law considers both the 'comprehensive' and the 'causal' parts, as elements of the 'reflective part.'

### *PART III. DOES THE LAW IN THE NEW TESTAMENT CONSIDER THE INDIVIDUAL AS BOTH AN INTEGRATIVE, AND A REFLECTIVE PART OF GROUP?*

The arguments so far presented hold the view that the New Law considers the individual either as an integrative part, or as a reflective part, of the group. A close observation of the above texts cited under either part reveals, however, that the New Law considers the individual as both an integrative and a reflective part of the group.

Under Part I, the argument that the New Law considers the individual as only an integrative part of the group is based on one major text extracted from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Church in Rome, namely, the Analogy of Body (1 Co. 12: 12-30). On the other hand, under Part II, the argument that the New Law considers the individual as only a reflective part of the group is based on two major texts, one extracted from the Gospel of Matthew, namely, the Last Judgment (Mt. 25: 35-40), and another from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Church in Rome, relating to the 'mutual improvement' (Rm. 14: 15, 19) of Christians.

With regard to the first argument, the same text quoted to support the view that the individual is an integrative part of the group, can also be used to support the view that the individual is a reflective part of the group. An indication of this is at least three verses which can be extracted from the 'Analogy of Body':

- v. 19 "If all the parts were the same, how could it be a body?"
- v. 26 "If one part is hurt, all parts are hurt with it. If one part is given special honor, all parts enjoy it."
- v. 27 "Now you together are Christ's body; but each of you is a different part of it."

The argument of Part I hold that since, under v.19, all the parts must be different in order to make a group, namely, the body, an element of group, then, is diversity of parts. For if the parts were to be the same, it would be impossible to constitute a body. But no less than parts which must be diverse in order to constitute a body, each part must then reflect the existence of the body in order to be part of it, it being otherwise impossible to recognize that the part is part, or part of the body to which it belongs. Accordingly, the individual as part of a group is no less an integrative than a reflective part of the group to which he belongs. It might be argued that if the view that the individual as an aggregate part of the group were accurate, the New Law would be conceiving the group as a material entity the existence of which would be the result of the sum of individuals. In this sense, this argument goes, it would be impossible for the individual to reflect the group as a whole. I disagree. I have stated above that the New Law takes the group as a spiritually dynamic, endlessly growing and ever strengthened entity by individuals' works of love. In this sense, being part of the group, the individual reflects the existence of that group.

On the other hand, vs. 26 and 27 find expression in the necessity of unity, since if one part is hurt or honored the whole is hurt or honored. Under the New Law, diversity is united many, one into many as much as many into one, as it is argued above under v.19. If the individual were not an integrative part of the group, the existence of unity would be impossible; for unity is necessarily unity of parts. This granted, the state of the individual, then, must reflect the state of the whole, since by "snapping at each other and tearing each other to pieces, [individuals] will destroy the whole..." (Ga. 5: 15).

I conclude, then, that the New Law, in reference to unity and diversity as conceived in the Analogy of Body, considers the individual as both an integrative and a reflective part of the group.

On the other hand, with regard to the argument of Part II, the texts quoted to support the view that the individual is a reflective part of the group can also be used to support the view that the individual is an integrative part of the group.

The main texts cited to support the argument of Part II are the following: Mt. 25:35-40, and Rm. 14: 15, 19.

(1) Mt. 25: 35-40

“...[f]or I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you made me welcome; naked and you clothed me, sick and you visited me, in prison and you came to see me. Then the virtuous will say to him in reply, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you; or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and make you welcome; naked and clothe you; sick or in prison and go to see you?’ And the King will answer, ‘I tell you solemnly, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me.’”

(2) Rm. 14: 15

“...if your attitude...is upsetting your brother, then you are hardly being guided by charity.” (Emphasis added)

(3) Rm. 14: 19

“...let us adopt any custom that leads to peace and our mutual improvement.” (Emphasis added)

The first text here parallels v. 26 of the Analogy of Body quoted above, namely,

“If one part is hurt, all parts are hurt with it. If one part is given special honor, all parts enjoy it.”

Like v. 26, the Last Judgment identifies one activity with all other activities of the individual parts of the group. However, the Last Judgment is different from v. 26; for unlike v. 26 which emphasizes the relation between members, the Last Judgment stresses the relation between the members and the whole (“...*And the King will answer, ‘I tell you solemnly, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me.’*”). This, actually, is in accordance with the distinction made above in the introduction, between a horizontal, and a vertical, relation between the individual and the group; the former type of relation being an expression of the integrative part, the latter of the reflective part. But, the members mentioned in v. 26 are taken as the ‘whole’ mentioned in v. 27 of the same text, namely,

“You together are Christ’s body; but each of you is a different part of it.”

In this sense, the Last Judgment parallels the Analogy of Body. But the argument of Part II quotes the Last Judgment to support the view that the New Law considers the individual as a reflective part of the group; and the argument of Part I quote the Analogy of Body to support the view that the New Law considers the individual as an integrative part of the group. Since I show here that one text parallels the other, I therefore conclude that the New Law, in reference to these texts, considers the individual as both an integrative and a reflective part of the group.

With regard to the second and the third texts, the argument of Part II states that no less than an individual whose good act is done out of love is concerned with others (Ga. 5: 13-14), an individual whose good act is done out of love gives witness to his deed publicly (Rm. 12: 17-18), and as he is noticed by other individuals (Rm. 14: 15), he helps build up the Body (Rm. 14: 18-19). The New Law, therefore, considers the individual as a reflective part of the group. Now the individual's behavior constitutes the group's behavior, in the respect that the individual behavior, under the Law of Love, builds up (*See* Rm. 14: 18-19) or shapes the group's behavior, since the individual as a component of the group to which he belongs, contributes to the existence of the group, through his will to realize the group's behavior. Thus, under the same example, the New Law considers the individual as also an integrative part of the group. The difference in considering the individual as an integrative and a reflective part of the group here lies in the angle from which the relation between the individual and the group is looked at. If it is looked from the angle of the group as a whole, namely, the group is reduced to its ultimate parts, the New Law would be considering the individual as an integrative part contributing to the building of the group as a whole. But, if it is looked at from the angle of the individual, the New Law would be considering the individual as a reflective part of the group, whose activity exemplifies the group standard setting, as explained above.

I conclude, therefore, that the New Law, in reference to all the texts quoted here and others that would parallel them, considers the individual as both an integrative and a reflective part of the group.

## CONCLUSION

From all that has been said, I have shown *how* under the New Testament the individual may be *part* of a group, as a way to break from communalistic thinking, and ultimately reach individualistic thinking.

The mission of Jesus can be summarized in the following terms: (a) calling for breaking free from communalism as conceived by the Old Testament; (b)



calling for individualism, and (c) calling for the ‘individual as part of a group’ as a step forward to purify humanity from any communalistic thinking.

Nevertheless, I ask: If Jesus breaks free from communalism, and conceives individualism as a goal to which the whole human race is directed, through “the individual as part of a group,” then why the New Testament after stating that people will not be divided any more into religions and races and cultures says that the whole world will be reunited in Christ (Col. 3:11f)? For “reunion” here expresses community, and not group. Actually, Saint Paul states in his Letter to the Church of Rome (8: 29), that Christ is the “true image of God.” But, “true image of God” is indeed “humanness” as such. Thus, the New Testament calls for the whole world to be reunited in “humanness.” And if “reunion” is community and community is defined by a sense of identity, then Jesus calls for a reunion in humanness as a sense of identity.

Now, nothing in the call for the whole world to be reunited in humanness as a sense of identity may be interpreted as implying exclusiveness of the communities as conceived under the Old Testament or inclusiveness thereof within Christianity. This would be in direct contradiction of the Analogy of Body which asserts respect for diversity. Nothing in the call for humanness may be interpreted either as implying stepping out of its own as to reach something different from its own. Rather, the call for humanness as a sense of identity is a transcendental experience, where the old community is transformed into a new community by way of the group.

A recent vibrant example of ‘the individual as part of a group’ is the United Nations. The historic break through that the United Nations achieved in 1945 is not, as often it is pointed out to, in being an unprecedented world organization. It is a historical misunderstanding, indeed. The United Nations historic break through lies specifically in this, that it is a group whose aim is preserving and standing on the dignity of individual *simpliciter*. It took the human race almost two thousand years to be able, with the advent of the United Nations, to break with communalistic thinking. The United Nations is an as yet unaccomplished group, for it has not reached a point where humanness is conceived as a sense of identity.

Another vibrant example of ‘the individual as part of a group’ is dialogue among religions. For in reference to the call of Jesus for breaking with community thinking, dialogue among religions would be futile. What human society is in need of, in reference to the ‘individual as part of a group,’ is to help individuals belonging to communities to break free from communalistic boundaries, which can only be done by way of experiencing individualism in

groups. The 'humanness experience' which is based on the 'individual as part of a group' is a transcendental experience that calls upon the individuals of different religious communities to transcend their communities by uniting within a group for a specific goal as to experience a new community, whose sense of identity is humanness as such. This cannot be achieved through dialogues, rather through transcendental experience.

It is interesting to note that the distinction that Jesus makes between 'the individual as part of a group' and 'the individual *simpliciter*' has influenced, directly or indirectly, the distinction that States of the modern world have been making between socialism and communism. For 'the individual as part of a group' has a direct bearing on socialism, since it embraces the social aspect of the 'individual,' and the 'individual *simpliciter*' is closely connected with communism, since it embraces the common denominator to all human beings, namely, humanness. Unfortunately, the world's application of this distinction has not squared with the concept the New Law has conferred upon it. Where communism has failed human dignity within the community, the New Law has preserved it without fail within the group.

Does this mean that our vision of a world of peace and brotherhood needs to be squared with a vision of a world in which the individual is part of a group?

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